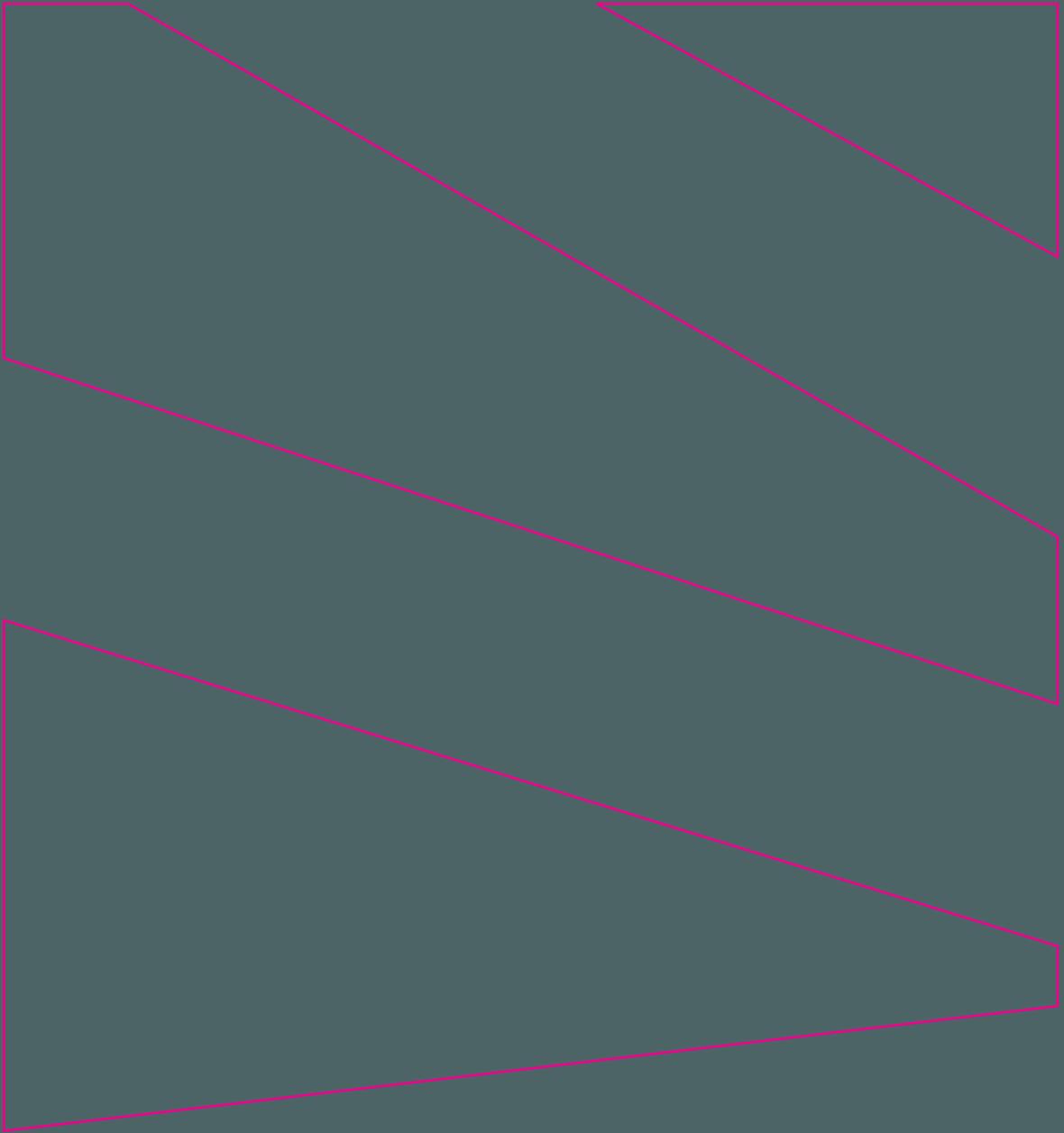




THE OXFORD RESEARCH CENTRE IN THE HUMANITIES



ANNUAL REVIEW | 2020-21



THE OXFORD RESEARCH CENTRE IN THE HUMANITIES





# 55

research networks



# 6

major  
research  
programmes



# 6

knowledge  
exchange  
fellows



# 239

research-led events  
with audiences totalling  
over **58,000** people



## ABOUT TORCH

Launched in May 2013, TORCH stimulates, supports, and promotes research activity of the very highest quality that transcends disciplinary and institutional boundaries and engages with wider audiences.

### CONTACT US

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### CONTENTS

Welcome	4-5
Moments	6-7
Programmes	8-13
Networks	14-19
International Projects	20-21
Knowledge Exchange	22-29
Humanities Cultural Programme	30-31
Book at Lunchtime	32
Disappointed Guests	33
Spotlight on Researchers	34-35
Early Careers	38-39

# WELCOME



**Professor Louise Richardson**  
Vice-Chancellor,  
University of Oxford

Living during a pandemic means living with exceptional and constant change. Exceptional change, though, breeds innovation, and this has been borne out by activity across the Humanities at Oxford.

I have been particularly proud to see TORCH lead the way in digital events, supporting colleagues throughout the division to not only continue bringing their world-leading research to the public, but to reach a wider public than ever before.

No less important has been TORCH's commitment to continue supporting its array of networks, projects, and individual researchers as they build new and exciting interdisciplinary connections. In the face of today's global challenges, it is vital that we work together across fields of knowledge, and utilise the Humanities' insights into human behaviours both collective and individual, past and present.

TORCH's collaborative work also goes beyond the university, particularly through the Humanities Cultural Programme, funded by a landmark £150 million gift from philanthropist and businessman Stephen A. Schwarzman. The creative projects supported by the Humanities Cultural Programme have played a vital role in maintaining and developing the University's partnerships with local cultural organisations during the last difficult year. I look forward to seeing the Programme reach new ambitious heights of public engagement with research ahead of the 2025 opening of the Schwarzman Centre, a new home for Oxford Humanities.

In the last year, TORCH has provided a hub of connectivity and potential for the University's researchers and for the wider community, and I am delighted that it continues to grow in new directions.



**Professor Daniel Grimley**  
Associate Head of Humanities  
Division (Research),  
University of Oxford

Although the past few months have proven especially challenging for all of us, the value of the Humanities has never felt more urgent. TORCH makes a

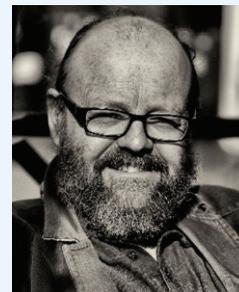
pivotal contribution to our research engagement, both through seed funding for networks, programmes, and projects, and through its work to foster new relationships between the University and external partners.

The Humanities Cultural Programme is a prime example of TORCH's ability to bring new influences and ideas into the research environment. Artists such as Katie Mitchell have been hosted as Visiting Fellows this year, and have brought their artistic perspectives into conversation with academic ones. Meanwhile, the online *Big Tent! Live Event* series increased access to these collaborations, keeping us informed and entertained from home with fortnightly talks bringing writers, performers and other creatives together with academics to explore the biggest questions of our day.

International partnerships have flourished despite the disruption of the last year, with the new Paris-Oxford Partnership enabling researchers at the Université de Paris to collaborate and exchange ideas through an Early Career Researcher Partnership Programme and a Visiting Fellowship Programme.

The Oxford-Berlin Partnership continues to fund projects in collaboration with our colleagues at the Universität der Künste Berlin, resulting in, among other things, an array of podcasts on subjects from AI to the environmental crisis. These partnerships are hugely important in advancing and expanding the research conducted in the Humanities Division.

I look forward to seeing how TORCH continues to broaden its reach in the coming year: in its engagement with researchers across disciplines, and in the audiences it brings into contact with these researchers and their work.



**Professor Wes Williams**  
TORCH Director,  
University of Oxford

A Journal of the plague year: this has been a year like no other, and the temptation to set this annual review under Defoe's title has been strong. For TORCH, as for our partners both within the university and beyond its walls, the past twelve months have been shaped, but not defined by our collective responses to the pandemic. We moved almost entirely online, adapted to new rhythms of working and being, and generated innovative ways to support researchers and to collaborate with partners in what remains an ever-changing environment.

As a result, the work of TORCH is more widely recognised and better understood than ever before; our local connections have matured and grown stronger; and our international audiences have expanded in remarkable ways. The Big Tent! Live Events series helped to establish our Humanities Cultural Programme as a ground-breaking experiment in research engagement, bringing relevant, research-and-practice fuelled conversations to a public online audience, supported by enthusiastic viewers in over 29 countries. From Katie Mitchell and Ben Whishaw discussing the relationship between film and live performance, to the Villiers Quartet world premiere of a new work by Delius, by way of Professor Homi K. Bhabha in conversation with Professor Margaret MacMillan 'On Being Unprepared (For Our Own Times)' – the series encapsulated the diverse research areas that TORCH places into conversation.

Interdisciplinary networks have always been at the heart of our research collaborations, and they continued to thrive even in this difficult year. Our international partnerships have likewise grown in importance. TORCH networks and programmes responded to the challenges, questions and opportunities raised by the year's events, across the globe, in real time, and through their own particular lenses: from Race and Resistance and Caribbean Studies through Heritage Pathways to Climate Crisis Thinking and Intersectional Humanities. We are proud to be a home for the formation of these diverse research communities.

In light of the pandemic, our work with our partners in the arts, heritage, and creative industries has become even more essential. TORCH Knowledge Exchange Fellowships have been one important way in which we have been able to innovate further in this field, through projects involving the Yorke Dance Project, Modern Art Oxford, the Virtual World Heritage Laboratory, and many more.

As we look towards the 2025 opening of the Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, TORCH will continue to explore the complex terrain of research engagement in this spirit of collaboration, co-creation, and sustainable innovation. Enabling and supporting mutually beneficial exchange across, within, and between our diverse communities, we hope to increase the social impact and understanding of humanities research.



**Dr María del Pilar Blanco**  
TORCH Academic Champion  
for Networks and Partnerships,  
University of Oxford

2020-21 was my first year (of three) as TORCH Academic Champion for Networks, Programmes, and International Partnerships. In a period that was as invigorating as it was testing, the TORCH

Networks and Programmes team were busy strategising new ways forward to support our different cohorts of academics. We all continued to get used to new ways of collaborating and maintaining a thriving research culture, despite all the difficulties brought on by the pandemic. It was a busy and rewarding year: as with other sectors of TORCH, the webinar format was a lifeline that allowed different networks of scholars to connect with guest speakers and audiences locally and globally.

Attendance to our events went beyond our wildest imagination; our YouTube channel (with over 7.5K subscribers) has been an invaluable instrument in showcasing our academics' research. We were delighted to award network grants in 2020-21 to "Arts, Biodiversity, Climate", "Writing Technologies", the "Reimagining Performance Network", and "Queer Intersections Oxford". These groups of scholars from across disciplines and career stages represent thrilling research directions. In addition, they point to areas of need in our current curricula across the Humanities and beyond. We are genuinely thrilled to be the home for these future academic directions.

TORCH programmes have had an equally busy and transformative year. We've established revamped structures for the four headline programmes (Environmental Humanities, Intersectional Humanities, Medical Humanities, and Race & Resistance), which will facilitate leadership and more streamlined connections amongst scholars from across Oxford's academic divisions. Having secured a network funding partnership with the John Fell Fund from 2021-22 onwards, we have also been busy setting up funding schemes that support different constituencies and in particular postgraduate and undergraduate students. The Critical-Thinking Communities (for DPhil students) and the Interdisciplinary Futures (for BA/MA students) were launched in 2021 to support groups willing to think collaboratively beyond the bounds of their disciplinary areas.

It has been an immense pleasure and honour to work with the TORCH family as the inaugural Academic Champion and I continue to be energized by my colleagues' brilliance, indefatigable spirit, and their resilience throughout this challenging time.



## September 2020 | Katie Mitchell in conversation with Ben Wishaw

Bringing together internationally acclaimed theatre director Katie Mitchell and BAFTA-winning actor Ben Wishaw, this conversation probed what 'liveness' means in an online world, interrogated possibilities for more environmentally friendly theatre, and has garnered 11,000 views on our YouTube channel.



## February – March 2021 | The Terra Lectures in American Art

We supported the History of Art faculty with the online delivery of this series of lectures, which were given by Professor Emily Burns on *Performing Innocence: US Artists in Paris, 1865 - 1914*. Over the course of four lectures, Professor Burns explored how Americans in Paris performed a cultural immaturity that pandered to European expectations that the United States lacked history, tradition, and culture.



## November 2020 | Moon Viewing

Remote audiences around the world were sent a beautifully illustrated poem-riddle, written by Professor of Poetry Alice Oswald, to be opened at midnight on the night of the full moon. Accompanied by a pre-recorded dance piece released online, this 'postal poetry performance' was created in collaboration with the English Faculty, the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama, and DANSOX.

## March 2021 | Dyslexia at Oxford

Grounded in human storytelling, this hour-long documentary drew from conversations with 21 speakers to generate a sense of both shared and diverging experiences of dyslexia, and of a network of neurodivergent people in one city. Met with much enthusiasm during its online premiere, Olivia Williamson's documentary is an important resource that celebrates our different ways of thinking.



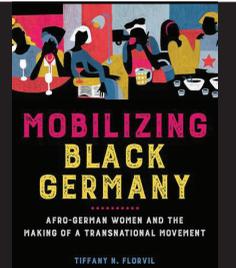
## January 2021 | Race and Resistance: The Future of Black British Studies with Kennetta Perry

Dr Kennetta Hammond Perry spoke with the Race and Resistance Programme on her work as the director of Stephen Lawrence Research Centre, and outlined potential directions for the future of Black British Studies, particularly Black British History.



## March 2021 | In Conversation with Tiffany N. Florvil: Decolonial Discourses

As part of our International Engagement, we supported this event from Decolonial Discourses and German Studies, where Tiffany N. Florvil gave a remarkable talk on her book, *Mobilizing Black Germany: Afro-German Women and the Making of a Transnational Movement*.



## January 2021 | Our intense biopolitical present: COVID and before

Part of a series of roundtables on Greek Studies Now, this event assessed the contemporary relevance of the question of biopolitics – the politics over life. In 2020, biopolitics re-emerged as a way to understand the COVID-19 global emergency. At the same time, biopolitics was already part of the public debate; in Greece, particularly, it was central to discussions in the last decade of constant crisis and austerity politics.



## May 2021 | In Conversation with Samson Kambalu and Emma Ridgeway

Professor Samson Kambalu, who in 2021 won the prestigious Fourth Plinth commission, spoke with Modern Art Oxford curator, Emma Ridgeway, about his exhibition *New Liberia*. Speaking through the complex layers of history surrounding his artistic vision for a utopia of international racial justice, Professor Kambalu drew on work from across his TORCH Knowledge Exchange project, in particular his engagement with the work of John Ruskin.



## February 2021 | The White Rose Pamphlets - A Live Reading

The history of the White Rose pamphlets is a dramatic story of anti-Nazi resistance, which the White Rose Project (led by Dr Alex Lloyd) told in real time on social media over the course of twelve days, from the arrest of the student pamphleteers, through to their swift trial and execution. The project culminated with a live reading of these powerful texts, translated from German by a group of students.

## July 2021 | Women, Storytelling, Silence and War

The Oxford Network for Armenian Genocide Research welcomed Olivia Katrandjian, founder of the Armenian Literary Alliance, to discuss about the role of storytelling in illuminating often overlooked roles of women in conflict, and how literature allows us to imagine a future after war.



# PROGRAMMES

Our 6 research programmes bring together existing major research groups and individuals working in the same field to collaborate and incubate new ideas. For more information about our programmes, please visit [www.torch.ox.ac.uk/programmes](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/programmes).

[Environmental Humanities](#)

[Intersectional Humanities](#)

[Medical Humanities & Humanities and Healthcare](#)

[Race and Resistance](#)

[Oxford Medieval Studies](#)

[Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation \(OCCT\)](#)



## Environmental Humanities

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/environmental-humanities](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/environmental-humanities)

If the study of the environment has often been seen as the province of the natural and social sciences, recent work by scholars engaged in the Environmental Humanities is bringing vital new perspectives into the study of the Anthropocene, by shedding light on the past, current and future relationships between human beings and the physical environment. The TORCH Environmental Humanities Programme offers scholars and students the necessary, innovative platforms and resources to connect these different strands in order to generate meaningful collaborations and to add an essential Humanities voice to the debate.

The global pandemic threw up serious obstacles to the regular programme of lunchtime seminars, but we were able to hold one excellent online seminar, attracting participants from around the world, in which Dr Tess Somervell gave a thought-provoking paper on 'Narrating Climate Change: The Great Storm of 1703'. The Environmental Humanities programme also joined forces with the TORCH cultural programme for an online 'In Conversation with Katie Mitchell, Fiona Stafford and Catherine Love', about theatrical practice and the Anthropocene.

The programme also ran a competition for Early Career Researchers and Postgraduate students, offering to fund and facilitate a one day Environmental Humanities conference. The standard of entry was so high that TORCH was able to support two excellent projects: 'Uprooting the Anthropocene: (re-)centring trees in tree-human relationships' and 'The Humanities in Deep Time'.

'Uprooting the Anthropocene' considered 'tree-ish' thinking in a range of contexts, from the political life of plants to urban forests.

Meanwhile, 'The Humanities in Deep Time' also followed this interdisciplinary and imaginative approach, asking how literature might grapple with extended temporalities, what role theology might have in shaping our ideas of time and eternity, and where the intersections between historical time and deep time lie. Both events attracted participants from the UK and the rest of the world, prompting rich discussion and intellectual exchange. The Environmental Humanities Programme continues to develop international connections, external links and interdisciplinary initiatives within the University of Oxford.

**Professor Fiona Stafford (English)**

## Intersectional Humanities

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/intersectional-humanities](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/intersectional-humanities)

In 2020–21, we launched 'Intersectional Humanities', as one of four core TORCH programmes. 'Intersectional Humanities' evolved out of an intensive process of reconceptualizing and restructuring 'Women in the Humanities'; we drafted a rationale, commissioned a new logo, and sought an expanded and more diverse steering committee. We affirmed the close affinity between this programme and the community studying and teaching on the MSt in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, which for the past 25 years has engaged in significant intersectional feminist work in the Humanities.

In Michaelmas Term 2020, the online series 'After Modernism: Women, Gender, Race' invited twelve UK and international speakers to present their research on this topic over three workshops convened by Pelagia Goulimari: Elizabeth Abel (University of California, Berkeley); Lilith Acadia (National Taiwan University); Susan Arndt (University of Bayreuth); Dorothee Boulanger (Faculty of Modern Languages, Oxford); Louise Hardwick (University of Birmingham); Jane Hiddleston (Faculty of Modern Languages, Oxford); Cyraina Johnson-Roullier (University of Notre Dame); Suzan Meryem Rosita Kalayci (Faculty of History, Oxford); Saul Nelson (Ruskin School of Art, Oxford); Ola Osman (University of Cambridge); Susan Stanford Friedman (University of Wisconsin–Madison); Jean Wyatt (Occidental College).

In Hilary Term 2021, the online series 'Gendered Powers', convened by Jane Garnett, launched its first two conversations: 'Looking the Part: History's Power to Change the View' with Brenda Stevenson (UCLA)

and Mishka Sinha (St John's College, Oxford); and 'Human Rights? Human Flourishing? Critical Reflexivity and Legal Norms' with Hauwa Ibrahim (Peace Institute), Cristina Valega Chipoco (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú), Helen Mountfield QC (Mansfield College, Oxford) and Marie Tidball (Oxford University Disability Law and Policy Project).

In Hilary Term and Trinity Term 2021, the Feminist Thinking Research Seminar, organised by the students of the interdisciplinary Humanities MSt in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies (and convened by Jane Garnett, Pelagia Goulimari and Emily Cousens), hosted a series of speakers: Judith Butler (University of California, Berkeley); Paula Bergallo (University of Torcuato Di Tella, Argentina); Lipika Pelham (author of *Passing: An Alternative History of Identity*); Elisabeth Lebovici (author of *Ce que le cida m'a fait*); Lidia Casas (Diego Portales University, Chile); Sophie Lewis (author of *Full Surrogacy Now*). The series also hosted three panel discussions: 'Gesticulating ... Wildly' with curator Brenda Guesnet and artist Helen Anna Flanagan (2019 IKOB Feminist Art Prize); 'Glitches in the Archive: A Discussion with the Women's Art Library' with Symrath Patti, Claire Collison, Lauren Craig, Bella Milroy and Althea Greenan; and 'Protest & Pandemic: Racism, Inequality and Violence during Covid-19' with Hau-Yu Tam (End Violence and Racism Against ESEA Communities), Shatema Threadcraft (Dartmouth College) and Che Gossett (Columbia Law School).

**Professor Jane Garnett (History) and Dr Pelagia Goulimari (English)**

## PROGRAMMES *CONTINUED*

### Medical Humanities & Humanities and Healthcare

TORCH continues to be a hub for growing projects which bridge across between humanities, medicine and healthcare more generally. Many initiatives are growing and established across the university and one of the key aspirations of the steering committee in the coming year will be towards thinking about humanities and global health.

One new indication of this research direction is a project entitled *Infecting Minds?* which is led, on the humanities side, by Dr Sally Frampton. This project, funded by the Wellcome ISSF and John Fell Fund, is in collaboration with colleagues in the medical sciences division and the [Africa Health Research Institute](#). Bringing together perspectives from social sciences and history, it investigates the historical, religious and cultural backdrop to vaccine hesitancy in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. In addition to investigating responses to the COVID-19 vaccines, three vaccine-preventable infections are of primary focus because they represent contrasting challenges and may highlight different aspects of hesitancy: Hepatitis B, Tuberculosis (TB) and Measles.

The project unites a collaborative, multidisciplinary team. Social science researchers are undertaking qualitative research to gain insights into beliefs, behaviours and acceptance of vaccines in the region. Historical and other humanities researchers will look at the role of political and social change in South Africa, the relationship between medical research and imperialism, local narratives and stories that have influenced perceptions about vaccination, the historical genealogy of health infrastructures and the influence of national or local vaccine policy.

Closer to home, a curriculum introducing humanities to Oxford's medical school continues to evolve and develop. The 2020-21 academic year saw 6 Firms totalling 160 students passing through the curriculum consisting of four seminars. Each seminar is oriented around one or more roles of the doctor set out in the Royal College of Physicians' *Advancing Medical*

*Professionalism*, a report on which Oxford-based research had a significant impact. Each rotation through the curriculum culminated in professionalism presentations by groups of medical students, where solutions to remedy problems or advance practices in healthcare and of professionalism were introduced. Leaders from Oxford University Hospitals NHS

Trust and Oxford Health are present on the judging panel as well as members of the multidisciplinary team from the hospital and expert patient tutors.

Enhancements to the curriculum for the 2021-22 academic year have included the practice of creative reflection and the curation of artefacts (i.e., poetry, short stories, artwork, music, etc.) that illuminate student-responses to their learning, reading, and experiences. Dr Gina Hadley is the Medical Education Fellow and Marie Allitt held the post of Humanities and Healthcare Fellow for the first two years of the grant. Marie led the innovative move to online seminars during the COVID-19 pandemic, prior to a new appointment to a position at the University of Edinburgh. In her stead, Ashley Moyse has taken over the role of Humanities and healthcare fellow alongside Dr Hadley. This team are incorporating multidisciplinary team working across healthcare into their interdisciplinary approach to professionalism education, with several research outputs in the pipeline.

These projects provide an insight into the wide range of innovative activity across the university in this field.

#### Professor Joshua Hordern (Theology and Religion)



### Race and Resistance

In 2020 and 2021, the Race and Resistance programme has continued to facilitate informed conversations about race, racism, resistance, and liberation through a broadly online programme of activity. We've brought together like-minded students, researchers, and faculty members from departments across the University, as well as providing a space for the academy to connect with Oxford's local community.

In Hilary term, we held a series of fortnightly events, starting with Dr Kennetta Perry (De Montfort) discussing 'The Future of Black British Studies', followed by 'The Ebony and Ivory Tower: Black Representation in Academic Spaces', a joint event with The Black Legacy Society. These public events were accompanied by a series of smaller workshops, reading groups, and research showcases that enabled us to foster a sense of community for both researchers and students.

In Trinity term, we hosted three more exciting public conversations. Dr Meleisa Ono-George (Warwick), spoke on 'The Politics of Black British History'. Professor Dan Hicks (Pitt Rivers) gave a talk on 'Museum Decolonisation and the Restitution of Cultural Heritage, Race and Resistance', and Kike Ojo-Thompson explored the importance of preparing to face resistance in the fight for equity, in conversation with Professor Patricia Daley (Geography).

We hope to be able to come together in person next year, and to continue building connections that bridge disciplines, research areas, and University and local communities.

**Professor Stephen Tuck (History), Professor Patricia Daley (Geography), Dr Chantelle Lewis (History)**

### Oxford Medieval Studies

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/oxford-medieval-studies](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/oxford-medieval-studies)

Oxford Medieval Studies has had another hugely productive year, despite – or even partly because of – the pandemic. Following the excellent advice of TORCH's Nikki Carter, we decided to expand the team to cover different aspects of communication and online events management (see image).

Under the stewardship of Caroline Batten as Comms Officer who developed the weekly email into a poetic artform, a whole wassail of postgraduate medievalists pulled the digital strings, commissioned, and wrote blog posts, ran conferences, tweeted, recorded roundtables, and in between used every open-air medieval venue around Oxford to meet Covid-safe in person. A splendid example for this was the 'Dark Archives 2.0' conference which kicked off the academic year (read a report by Llewelyn and Tom about their experience in running the conference); Stephen Pink who organised this for Medium Aevum in 2019 had already conceived it as a born-digital conference (<http://darkarchiv.es/>) so that in September 2020 we were ahead of the learning curve of zoomified academic life. We even dared – and pulled off – a medieval Compline, sung in Latin from five locations around Oxford, including the Norman Crypt of St-Peter-in-the-East, the library church of St Edmund Hall.

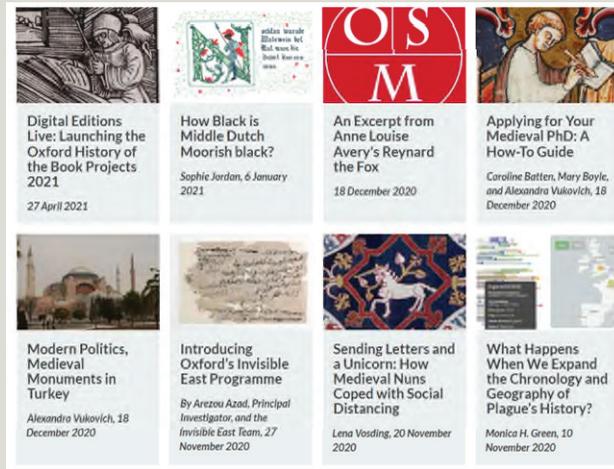
The Hilary Term Interdisciplinary Lecture, live streamed via the OMS YouTube channel, was delivered by Prof. William Chester Jordan, as was the reflection by Jim Harris from the Ashmolean on the importance of objects for teaching medieval studies. Together, the videos of the OMS channel attracted several thousand views since its start a year ago. The medieval studies booklets have been downloaded over 1500 times, the weekly newsletter has over 700 subscribers and the twitter feed @OxMedStud is reaching nearly 5,000 followers.

With the new academic year, we are starting to bring back in-person events while continuing with online events for outreach purposes. What definitely will be a live all-sensory event is the second edition of the Medieval Mystery Cycle which is planned for 23 April 2022 and will bring together a dozen different groups of medievalists, performing multi-lingually in various locations around St Edmund Hall. As in 2019, it will be directed by Henrike Lähnemann and Lesley Smith, who has also now taken on the role as OMS Co-Director. Also new to the team is Luisa Ostacchini who has taken over the Communications Officer role from Caroline Batten

## PROGRAMMES *CONTINUED*

and is making the weekly emails even more colourful with newly captioned snippets from Oxford manuscripts.

**Professor Henrike Lähnemann (Modern Languages),  
Professor Lesley Smith (History)**



Caption: A selection of blog posts from the start of the academic year 2020-21: Medieval advice on social distancing, a how-to guide to applying for a PhD and much more

## Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/comparative-criticism-and-translation-0](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/comparative-criticism-and-translation-0)

The highlight of OCCT's year is actually a beacon that repeats like a lighthouse beam: the fortnightly lunchtime discussion group, at which our thirty or so core participants hear talks and share thoughts, often sparking ideas which grow into research projects and publications. The effects of the pandemic on this forum were better than we had feared: the sense of community survived online, while the number of attendees vastly increased. A key theme this year was the politics of language and translation: among the speakers were Claudio Russello on the ideas of the vernacular in China and Greece, Eleonora Colli on translation and gender, Sowon S. Park (from UCSB) on writing systems, and David Karashima (from the University of Tokyo) on translating Murakami. Two especially happy events were online discussions led by

OCCT members who had just published their first books: Daniele Nunziata, on his *Colonial and Postcolonial Cyprus*, and Eleni Philippou (OCCT's co-ordinator) on *Speaking Politically: Adorno and Postcolonial Fiction*.

Meanwhile, OCCT research projects advanced in exciting directions. Postgraduate students Anna Saroldi and Rowan Anderson staged a conference on 'Fictions of Retranslation', exploring the complex effects in culture of repeated translation of the same text. Our long-running 'Fiction and Other Minds' strand collaborated with the University of Copenhagen's Centre for Subjectivity Research for two days of talks on 'I and We: Literary Texts and the Constitution of Shared Identities'. The Prismatic *Jane Eyre* project (<https://prismaticjaneeyre.org/>) went into a phase of intense, collaborative work, writing the text for the multimedia, open-access book of the project which will appear next year.

OCCT's annual public event is our literary festival Oxford Translation Day, including the award of the Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize. Of course this could not be held in person, but here again the online format enabled us to draw in more diverse participants and reach a wider audience (recordings of some of the events are here: <https://www.occt.ox.ac.uk/oxford-translation-day>). This year, our focus was on African literature as it is remade through translation: perhaps the stand-out moment was Abdilatif Abdalla reading from his *Sauti ya Dhiki (Voice of Agony)*, one of the most important Swahili poetry books of the twentieth century and, with Annmarie Drury, discussing its forthcoming translation by Ken Walibora Waliuala.

OCCT has also secured funding for a Junior Research Fellowship in African and Comparative Literature, held at St Anne's College. Dr Tinashe Mushakavanhu has been appointed to the position, with projects on the Zimbabwe International Book Fair, and on hair salons as locations for multilingual story-telling and creativity. We are looking forward to the dialogue between this work and our other research strands in the year ahead.

**Professor Matthew Reynolds (English)**

**Professor of English and Comparative Criticism and Fellow of St Anne's College**

## NETWORKS

We have supported over 55 research networks, which reach across disciplines to build communities of scholars from a range of career stages to work together on innovative projects. For more information about our networks, please visit [www.torch.ox.ac.uk/networks](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/networks).

[Art, Biodiversity and Climate Network](#)

[Climate Crisis Thinking in the Humanities and Social Sciences](#)

[Queer Studies Network](#)

[Writing Technologies Network](#)

[Oxford and Empire Network](#)

[Silence Hub](#)

[Caribbean Studies Network](#)

[Colonial Ports and Global History \(CPAGH\)](#)

[Encoding Heritage Network](#)

[Oxford Network for Armenian Genocide Research](#)

[Comic Network](#)

[Pilgrimage Studies Network](#)

[New Critical Approaches to the Byzantine World](#)

[Future Thinking Network](#)

[SciPro Network](#)

[Ancient Music and Theology](#)

[Images and Thought](#)

## Art, Biodiversity and Climate Network

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/art-biodiversity-and-climate](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/art-biodiversity-and-climate)

The Art, Biodiversity, and Climate Network (ABC Network) bridges the gap that separates the Humanities Division (arts, music, performance, dance) from research into conserving our planetary support systems taking place in the MPLS Division. The Network engages creative practitioners and science researchers to build a new common imaginarium of the world as-it- could-be, transcending academic disciplinary boundaries and short-term political incentives.

This year, the Network supported nine artists to collaborate with University labs engaged in climate change research, from the Physical Oceanography lab to the Advanced Functional Materials and Devices Group. The artists and their primary collaborators took part in a workshop series convened by the network, aimed at enabling artist-scientist collaboration by examining the differences between illustrating scientific work and embodying it. Convenors also engaged in weekly mentorship sessions for each lab/artist team.

The resulting artworks are to be exhibited in Paris in October 2021, as well as at the Natural History Museum on November 5, 2021, and thereafter as a virtual exhibition in the Metaverse.

Next year, building on this years' positive rapport with the labs, we plan to set up another set of residencies. Having won seed funding, we will also start a partnership with the Academy of Arts in Berlin to develop methods to learn and teach transformative change and sustainable behaviour in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss.

**Anya Gleizer (DPhil in Performance Art and Geography),  
Katja Lehmann (DPhil in Microbiology, UKCEH)**

## Climate Crisis Thinking in the Humanities and Social Sciences

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/climate-crisis-thinking-in-the-humanities-and-social-sciences](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/climate-crisis-thinking-in-the-humanities-and-social-sciences)

The Climate Crisis Thinking in the Humanities and Social Sciences network acts to change the conversation around the climate crisis, advocating for the central importance of the Humanities and Social Sciences in understanding and responding to the challenges of our times. The network has grown in reach and reputation and now brings together dozens of researchers at all career stages, in Oxford, in other UK universities, and globally. We have well over a hundred subscribers to our mailing list and regularly attract large audiences for our events. To bring our research into broader public and policy conversations in this year of COP26, we ran a series of panel discussions and podcast 'COP26 Conversations' (recordings available on our website) with 33 participants from different institutions and professional backgrounds, as part of the UK Universities' COP26 Innovation Showcase. We had a poster and presentation accepted for **Climate Exp0 2021**, and, earlier, recorded a series of podcasts to support global climate youth leaders' Mock COP26.

One of our key collaborations this year has been *Animal Eyes on the Planet*, a project with researchers at Berlin University of Arts (UdK Berlin). This resulted in a series of podcasts (available on our website) discussing the value of combatting anthropocentrism and considering the climate crisis from animal perspectives, as well as drawing on the experiences of Japan's indigenous Ainu people. We also held public facing events such as 'Through Wind and Ice: Communicating the Climate Crisis', where we welcomed Professor Cymene Howe and Professor Dominic Boyer. They spoke about their work to create a memorial to Okjökull, Iceland's first glacier lost to climate change, and how to communicate the affective, sensed or felt dimensions of the environmental harms multiplying around us.

We have begun publishing work based on our conversations. Thirteen of us are currently finishing a collaborative article that offers reflections and a case study on productive interdisciplinary conversations. An earlier panel discussion has been published as a contribution to an open access special issue of the *Journal for the History of Environment and Society*: Amanda Power, Iva Pesa and Eiko Honda, 'Undoing the Discipline: History in the Time of Climate Crisis and COVID-19'.

As we work together to build fresh conceptualisations and new approaches from our disciplines, we have become increasingly aware of the urgent need for researchers in humanities and social sciences to scale up our responses. It takes a new kind of thinking and a different level of ambition for researchers in our disciplines to meet the magnitude, complexity and ubiquity of the issues facing life on earth. The science of climate change and ecosystem collapse is securely established.

What is needed now is a major shift of emphasis towards research and communication that supports rapid societal, political, ideological, educational and economic transformations. Funding bodies need to recognise the need for a radical shift in approach, and researchers in humanities and social sciences need to be prepared to take on a level of responsibility that has previously rested chiefly with scientists.

In the coming months, we will continue to think along these lines, contributing to Oxford's climate research and to wider, urgent, national and international conversations.

**Professor Nayanika Mathur (Anthropology) and Dr Amanda Power (History)**



Credit: Martin Seifert, Wikimedia

## NETWORKS

CONTINUED



### Queer Studies Network

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/queer-studies](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/queer-studies)

Since November 2017, Oxford's first interdisciplinary Queer Studies Network has offered a rich programme of events opening avenues of engagement with queer theory and LGBTQIA+ experiences, arts, and activism.

Over the past year, we've met for seminars on quilting and lesbian archives (Sarah-Joy Ford, Manchester) and LGBTQ+ refugees in South Africa (John Marnell, Wits); a screening and discussion of Mani Bruce Mitchell's *Intersexion* (2012); and a conversation between Jay Bernard and Lola Olufemi about archives, social history, cultural production, and black and trans feminisms. With the Geography-focused Spaces, Sexualities, and Queer Research Group, we facilitated an interdisciplinary workshop featuring early-career research on queer precarities. With People for Womxn\* in Philosophy, we hosted a seminar on feminism and trans-inclusivity (Prof. Carol Hay, UMass Lowell) and a panel on competing conceptions of feminist revolution (Katherine Behar, CUNY; Levi Hord, Columbia; Shaista Aziz, Oxford Anti-Racist City). We've also met informally, making space for network members to discuss research and seek advice.

As of October 2021, our work will be continued and evolved by Queer Intersections, a new TORCH network. Before launching, the Queer Intersections team organised, for the Queer Studies Network, a screening of *United in Anger* (2012), a conversation with producer Sarah Schulman and a seminar on *Call Me by Your Name* (2017; Sergio Rigoletto, U. Oregon). We look forward to Queer Intersections' brilliant years to come.

**Ruth Ramsden-Karelse (DPhil in English), Mara Gold (DPhil in History), and Mori Reithmayr (DPhil in Politics)**

### Writing Technologies Network

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/writing-technologies](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/writing-technologies)

Thanks to ongoing restrictions in the offline world, the Writing Technologies Network established itself in its first year as not only an interdisciplinary but also a truly international network. Our 'Experimenting the Early Modern Elements' online study day, held over three afternoons, attracted up to 48 attendees and participants in each session, from countries including France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Turkey, and China. We explored, through discussion of literary, technical, and artistic material, how early modern developments in arts and techniques confronted nature as understood in the form of the four 'classical' elements: earth, water, air, and fire.

Two workshops on 'Compartments' took us from Oxford's own botanical gardens to the organising structures and logics of early modern compendia and experiments, and from portable medicine boxes to the 'framing' of texts, images, and objects in books and buildings of the pre-modern Islamic world. Paola Bertucci (Yale) discussed *The Artisanal Enlightenment* with a panel of respondents and attendees. In Michaelmas, a work-in-progress session considered Ibn 'Arabi's theory of language and ontology, and the mechanisms of representation in/of early modern royal entries. We look forward to a workshop with Katie Chenoweth (Princeton), on language, technologies, and bodies in *The Prosthetic Tongue*.

**Dr Jennifer Oliver (MML), Professor Marie Thebaud-Sorger (Visiting Researcher at the Maison Française d'Oxford)**

## Oxford and Empire Network

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/oxford-and-empire](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/oxford-and-empire)

The Oxford and Empire Network encourages discussion of the history and legacies of colonialism in Oxford. It serves as a multi-disciplinary hub, with a multi-resource website, providing a central site for developing, promoting, and sharing research into the relationship between Oxford and imperialism, broadly conceived.

In the past year OxEmp has worked hard to develop its virtual presence. On our revamped website you can explore a community of scholars, the resources and research they've gathered, and a list of events and seminars connected to the Network.

Research published this past year includes two pieces analysing specific collections of the Pitt Rivers Museum, a post exploring Sir Arthur Evan's relationship to Empire, and an account of the meeting between Shen Fuzong and Thomas Hyde (the first documented encounter between an English and Chinese scholar).

A significant project of the past year has been the Oxford and Empire podcasts. With seven in total (with more on the way) this series seeks through accessible yet rigorous research to improve public engagement with imperial legacies in Oxford. The podcasts include an interactive map and additional resources. Topics include Dr Dexnell Peters discussing the life and legacy of Sir Eric Williams, local historian Liz Woolley following the trail of Lord Nuffield, and postgraduate Morgan Breene discussing the catamarans of the Pitt Rivers Museum.

### Haley Drolet (Research Assistant, History)



## Silence Hub

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/silence-hub](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/silence-hub)

Our events moved online during the pandemic. In 2020-21, we held three online Into Silence reading group sessions. At the first, in Michaelmas Term 2020, the eminent psychiatrist Dr Iain McGilchrist introduced passages from his best-selling book *The Master and His Emissary*. At the second, in Hilary Term 2021, Emeritus Professor of Politics Michael Freeden spoke about 'Concealed Silences and the Political'. At the third, in Trinity Term 2021, Dr Stephen Yeo (former Principal of Ruskin College), Dr Meryem Kalayci and Professor Kate McLoughlin read and discussed poetry about 'green silences'.

Professor McLoughlin's first filmed interview with the artist Tom Hammick for the series *Silence, Painting, Poetry* was also screened. Dr Kalayci organised an in-person information event about plans for the Silent Garden next to the Quaker Meeting House in St Giles. Members of the Quaker Meeting and other members of the public were invited to participate in an archaeological information session and a poetry reading.

### Professor Kate McLoughlin (English), Dr Suzan Meryem Rosita Kalayci (History), Professor Willem Kuyken (Psychiatry)



## NETWORKS

CONTINUED

### Caribbean Studies Network

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/caribbean-studies-network](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/caribbean-studies-network)

During its first, pandemic-hit year, the Caribbean Studies Network ran twelve events, welcoming twenty-two scholars to Oxford via Zoom, and attracting an audience from across the different divisions of the university and from across the world.

Highlights included talks by Melanie Newton on indigeneity and colonialism, Mónica Jiménez and Marisol LeBrón on police corruption in Puerto Rico, Colin Dayan on her classic text *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, and sixth-form students from Dominica State College on their work to document the impacts of Hurricane Maria. As well as involving students from the Caribbean, graduate students at Oxford also led discussions with acclaimed scholars.

A common thread was resilience in the face of natural disasters. Mimi Sheller discussed new research on mobilities in post-earthquake Haiti, and Sarah Molinari shared her work on natural disasters and the debt crisis in Puerto Rico. Closer to home, Luke de Noronha spoke about his work with Black British people scheduled for deportation before and after the Windrush scandal, interrogating Britain's ongoing relationship with the Caribbean.

The CSN has created both a global and a local community of scholars, working actively with partner organisations. One of our challenges for 2021-22 is to maintain our international reach, whilst also – now that we can meet in person – building a strong community of researchers here in Oxford.

Dr William Ghosh (English), Dr María del Pilar Blanco (MML), Dr David Howard (Sustainable Urban Development)



### Colonial Ports and Global History (CPAGH)

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/cpagh](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/cpagh) Twitter @cpagh\_TORCH

Founded in 2018, the CPAGH network aims to foster new collaborative thinking about colonial ports and global history through equitable research practices and innovative public engagement.

Despite the postponement of its 2020 Berlin international conference due to the pandemic, CPAGH held this event virtually, in July 2021, thanks to generous extended support from TORCH as well as additional support from the German Research Foundation and the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin. The conference, CPAGH's final TORCH event, was titled 'Myriad Materialities: Towards a New Global Writing of Colonial Ports and Port Cities'. The programme's rich offerings, coupled with the attendees' keen participation from across different time zones, certainly did not disappoint. Kicking off the event was the virtual World Café, an interactive ice breaker, from which proceeded four themed panels exploring the perspectives of class, gender, race and materialities; a thought-provoking keynote by Prof. Kristin Mann (Emory), an historian of transatlantic slavery; and a new sound work commissioned by CPAGH, created by Dr. Linda O Keeffe (Edinburgh), contemplating the postcoloniality of (lost) memories and languages. Looking ahead and building on CPAGH's TORCH-funded activities (2018-21), the co-leads will work towards a journal special issue as part of their next phase of publications.

Julia Binter (DPhil Anthropology), Olivia Durand (History), Yvonne Liao (Music), Helena F. S. Lopes (DPhil History), Katharina Oke (DPhil in History 2018), Min-Erh Wang (DPhil Musicology), Hatice Yıldız (History)

## Encoding Heritage Network



[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/encoding-heritage](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/encoding-heritage)

The (En)coding Heritage Network connects scholars from the humanities, social sciences and applied sciences interested in harnessing the power of 3D mapping, photogrammetry and virtual environments in studying cultural heritage. Together, participants explore the benefits and limitations of technological approaches for investigating historical records, material objects, visual art and cultural sites, and chart new paths of exploring our past and shared heritage.

Launched in Spring 2020, at the start of the pandemic, the network has conducted most of its activities virtually, reaching both local and global audiences. Activities in 2021 have included an international conference, 'Digital Approaches to Art History and Cultural Heritage', and a summer school course devoted to Digital Cultural Heritage at the Oxford Digital Humanities Summer School. The network also organised a popular seminar series, spanning topics such as digital mapping, data visualisation, digital art history, digital reconstruction, and new mobile applications for the recoding of architecture and cultural heritage. Videos of presentations can be accessed on the network website.

Plans are underway for September 2021, in collaboration with the Oxford X-Reality Hub, the (En)coding Heritage Network to hold the Immerse-Ed Hackathon, the first hackathon at Oxford devoted to immersive technologies. The event, modelled upon programming hackathons, tasked participants with devising solutions to challenges arising from the pandemic in four key areas: cultural heritage, education, environmental sustainability, and healthcare. International teams composed of participants from eleven countries took part in the event. The winning team was awarded \$10,000 of Amazon Web Services credit and expert mentorship to develop its idea over the course of the next two years.

**Dr Lisandra (Lia) Costiner (History of Art, network founder and lead), Dr Elizabeth Frood (Oriental Studies), Dr Matthew Nicholls (Classics), Dr Katrin Wilhelm (Geography), Giovanni Pala (History), Richard Smith (Bodleian Libraries), Dr Emanuela Vai (Musicology), Dr Kathryn Eccles (Oxford Internet Institute), Taylor Bennet (Archaeological Sciences), Paul Docherty (Oriental Studies), Magdalena Szalewska (History).**

## Oxford Network for Armenian Genocide Research

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/armenian-genocide-research](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/armenian-genocide-research)

The Oxford Network for Armenian Genocide Research (ONAGR) was founded by Dr Suzan Meryem

Rosita Kalaycı and Professor Theo Maarten van Lint and is based at Pembroke College and TORCH.

We believe that as one of the first of the 20th century's many genocides, the Armenian genocide provides a unique way into understanding the connective histories of state-sponsored human rights abuses in recent history. A central aim of the network therefore, is to make the Armenian genocide part of global conversations about human rights, witness and genocide prevention.

Now in its second year, the network has become a hub of collaboration. We announced our collaboration with the Columbia Armenian Oral History Collection on the transcription of an important Oral History Collection located at Columbia Libraries, for which we received John Fell Funding. We asked the illustrator Nvard Yerkanian to produce a set of illustrations based on some of these testimonies, with two of the illustrations gracing the back covers of the Oxford Review of Books. We also announced our collaboration with the Silence Hub on the Syria and Silence project for which we received Humanities Cultural Programme funding.

Our event 'Women, Storytelling, Silence and War' was one of our highlights of the year. In conversation with Olivia Katrandjian of the International Armenian Literary Alliance, we probed what stories we wanted to tell and how we ensure they are heard. We then launched the 'Question Your Teaspoons' competition with the IALA. This creative essay writing competition asked entrants to write about and reconsider the everyday, and we have been thrilled with the range of responses we've received from around the world.

Another highlight was our online event with the Syrian Voices project on the occasion of the 10th year anniversary of the Syrian uprising. One of our attendees described it as 'A powerful session, with an extraordinary panel of voices and perspectives. It brought the human dimension very much to the fore but was also practical.'

**Dr Suzan Meryem Rosita Kalaycı (History), and Professor Theo Maarten van Lint (Oriental Institute)**

# INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

We are delighted to have built new international partnerships in the last year, strengthening our relationships with the Université de Paris and the Berlin University Alliance in particular. We support a vibrant range of international research collaborations, ensuring that researchers at all stages in their careers have the opportunity to initiate and sustain projects with colleagues around the world.

Our International Officer, Dr Anbara Khalidi, has also worked to productively maintain existing international partnerships despite the travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In particular, we have supported Professor Dimitris Papanikolaou and the Greek Studies Now network in a series of vital discussions, which have

proved highly popular with our global online audience. In particular, *Greek and Green? Eco-turn in Modern Greek Studies* considered the environmental in relation to Greek theatre, economy, and literature, whilst "*We have never been racist*": *Rethinking race and ethnicity in contemporary Greece* explore how race was talked about in the context of Greek Studies and Greece.

Looking ahead, we are excited to be able to connect with international researchers in person, as we host Dr Obari Gomba in Michaelmas 2021 for his postponed Global South Visiting Professorship. Dr Gomba will visit from the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, to share and further his research on the politics of oil in the Niger Delta Region.



## Oxford x UdK Berlin Partnership in the Arts and Humanities

Following on from broader research links built between Oxford and Berlin in recent years, TORCH has worked closely with the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK Berlin) to seed fund collaborations through several rounds of grants totalling approximately €120,000. This will create a research “bridge” between UdK Berlin and the Oxford Humanities, exploring new methodologies, new modes of representation, and new uses of language that are applicable to the Arts and the Sciences alike.

Meanwhile, the Oxford UdK Creative Collaborations podcasts have explored these new research connections in a public format, exploring themes such as climate change, AI, and silence with researchers from both institutions. We are delighted to be able to support these research connections in their organic development.

## Paris-Oxford Partnership

In June 2021, we put out our first call for early career researchers and Visiting Fellows to spend a period of time at the Université de Paris. Early career researchers at Oxford were invited to work with their counterparts in Paris to create an interdisciplinary workshop, whilst the Visiting Fellowship programme supported visits of 1-2 months with the aim of creating substantial collaborative research outputs. In turn, TORCH will host Université de Paris researchers as they initiate collaborations in Oxford.



# KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE



TORCH's work in Knowledge Exchange develops a rich array of partnerships between researchers and organisations external to the University, expanding notions of interdisciplinarity and generating new possibilities for public engagement. As well as running a busy programme of Knowledge Exchange Fellowships and Seed Fund projects, we seek out and support work taking place in the key areas of Heritage, Theatre and Performance, Creative Industries, and Policy Engagement.

I was delighted to join TORCH as the new Director of Knowledge Exchange, Impact and Innovation at the end of the 2020-21 academic year. Having previously worked on knowledge exchange within the division, I know what a valuable resource TORCH is for academics wishing to undertake ambitious and unusual work with outside partners. I am grateful to my predecessor, Professor Wes Williams, for his work over the past three years to establish TORCH's place in the University's knowledge exchange ecosystem.

This year saw seven new Knowledge Exchange Fellowships, with highlights including Dr Samson Kambalu's collaboration with local gallery Modern Art Oxford on 'New Liberia', an exhibition exploring ideas of film and praxis with a focus on the problematic nature of the gift and its relationship to art. We also saw Professor Catriona Seth chart the life of Marie Antoinette through a series of objects, working to create podcasts with the Wallace Collection, Waddesdon Manor, and Conciergerie. Meanwhile, Professor Sue Jones has worked closely with Yorke Dance in an active exploration of 'Dance as Grace: Paradoxes and Possibilities'. It has been wonderful to see the Fellows reimagining what research outputs can be.

In the new academic year, we open the Knowledge Exchange Innovation Fund, which will resource partnerships in the areas of Creative Industries, Heritage, Theatre and Performance, and Policy Engagement. This fund will allow us to increase the number of researchers we are supporting in their knowledge exchange. It is focused around our priority themes, and we hope it will enable colleagues to develop innovative and entrepreneurial practices within Humanities research engagement.

Knowledge exchange has been a core part of my own research practice for a number of years, including as former Knowledge Exchange Champion for the Humanities Division, and I am hugely excited by the prospect of working with colleagues and external partners to develop mutually beneficial research collaborations.

**Professor Abigail Williams (English)**  
Director of Knowledge Exchange, Impact and Innovation for the Humanities Division

## Theatre and Performance

Theatre and Performance is one of four priority areas identified by the Humanities Division for investment in innovative knowledge exchange and public engagement with research.

Alongside work in the wider Creative Industries, Heritage and Policy, our TORCH Theatre and Performance strand builds strategic partnerships and develops creative projects for the mutual benefit of our world-leading research community and the arts and cultural sector.

2020-21 was a period of enormous challenge for the live performance community. We sought to be a sympathetic, supportive friend to our partners throughout the turbulence of ever-changing restrictions and emergency funding. By listening and responding to the evolving situation, we were able to innovate without intruding. Across the board, our existing relationships grew stronger and our existing projects adapted. Although our 2020-21 focus was on Oxfordshire theatres, the digital-first environment allowed us to reach out much further, setting the scene for exciting new ventures to come.

As TORCH's Theatre and Performance Officer, I worked on 22 projects and 50+ events with 26 researchers, 17 companies/venues and 15 freelance artists. I started up connections with a further 10 companies and 4 freelancers. We drew together experts from across theatre to debate the challenges and possibilities of the moment in an online seminar series, A Farewell to Zoom?, which culminated in TORCH's first hybrid event at the Old Fire Station in Oxford. We hosted an illuminating visit from actor and writer Lolita Chakrabarti as a Visiting Fellow in the Humanities Cultural Programme.

**Ruth Moore, Theatre and Performance Officer**



Credit 'Dress rehearsal for 'after birth' – image by Geraint Lewis

## Creative Industries

The creative industries sector continued to rebound from the coronavirus pandemic in 2021, experiencing a faster growth rate in gross value added (GVA) than the UK economy as a whole. After refocusing on key aims in the final months of 2020, TORCH kicked off 2021 by exploring and fostering mutually beneficial collaborations with external partners in emerging areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), gaming, virtual reality (VR) and video content. Led by Tasha Patel, Creative Industries Officer for the Humanities Division, projects included a pitching competition in partnership with independent production company Juniper, during which humanities researchers were invited to pitch research-based radio or television programme ideas to the company's CEO.

Throughout the year, TORCH also had initial discussions with a range of prospective partners, including Sky Arts, Epic Games, Hasbro, Abbey Road Studios and Rebellion Studios. Looking ahead to November 2021, TORCH will run a projection event at Oxford Castle and Prison to mark its 950th anniversary. A seven-minute video will be projected onto Oxford Castle, bringing together musicians, local historians, and academics from the university and aiming to attract over 2,000 attendees. It will be created in collaboration with Oxford Preservation Trust, and sound and light artists, Karen Monid and Ross Ashton. In 2022, a digital video content piece - created in collaboration with US digital media company Seeker - will be released, focusing on AI and creativity with contributions from Oxford researchers with expertise in this area. The content will also include footage of ultra-realistic artist robot, Ai-Da, during her upcoming live performance at the Dante Late Night event in the Ashmolean Museum.

**Tasha Patel, Creative Industries Officer**



## Policy Engagement

Humanities researchers not only produce research that is relevant to public policy, but also collaborate with policymakers, sharing evidence and expertise and supporting its use in decision-making. In cooperation with faculties, Research Services and the University-wide Policy Engagement Team, TORCH has continued to support researchers' engagement with policymakers.

TORCH and the Policy Engagement Team hosted two events for researchers. One explored the rewards and challenges of policy engagement from the perspective of researchers. The other brought UK policymakers together with researchers to consider how policymakers engage with the humanities.

Researchers also participated in wider policy networks and created new partnerships. Researchers have responded to government consultations and parliamentary inquiries and partnered with policymakers nationally and internationally. More than sixty researchers, doctoral students and professional services staff from the Division joined the Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN), and received regular updates on funding, training, and engagement opportunities.

Researchers who received funding for policy partnerships included:

- Professor Justin Jones and Dr Imen Neffati from the Faculty of Theology and Religion built a strong network of partners across government and civil society in Tunisia on inheritance law reform. Assisted by Tunisian-based graduate students, they developed a report in partnership with members of parliament, the Individual Freedoms and Equality Committee, the Association des Femmes Tunisienne pour la Recherche et le Développement, and the Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates.
- Dr Oliver Cox, Heritage Engagement Fellow, and Eleanor Townsend, DPhil candidate in the History of Art, worked with the Church of England and the Churches Conservation Trust on legislative proposals for managing the closure and re-use of parish churches. They engaged with a range of actors interested in preserving England's historic built environment and laid the foundation for partnerships across government and the heritage sector.
- Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson, Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Classics, worked as an expert advisor to the Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group, co-authoring an inquiry report and presenting evidence to parliament. Dr Holmes-Henderson was also appointed as an OPEN Leader. She led events for researchers on the use of social media in policy engagement and developed networks in languages and education policy.

**Jessica Simkiss, Humanities & Public Policy Officer**

## Heritage

The TORCH Heritage Programme enables ambitious and mutually beneficial partnerships that connect Oxford's world-leading expertise with the UK and international heritage sector. The team – including the flagship National Trust Partnership – provides expert advice for students and faculty looking to develop collaborative research, knowledge exchange and public engagement activities, whilst helping external organisations navigate Oxford to identify relevant expertise and researchers.

Notable successes included funding for a Social Sciences Engagement Fellowship to work with English Heritage on their Sustainable Conservation Asset Management Plan (SCAMP); a Knowledge Exchange Seed Fund award to support work exploring shortages in heritage skills in partnership with the Churches Conservation Trust; and Policy Engagement funding to work with the Church Commissioners to host online workshops on church closures.

Our Heritage Pathway supports graduate and early career researchers in developing the skills and connections required for a career in the heritage sector. The online world has suited Heritage Pathway, with record numbers of attendees engaging with speakers from organisations including the Royal Academy of Arts, V&A, Disability Collaborative Network and The Watts Gallery.

Inspired by our colleagues in the National Trust Partnership, the Heritage Partnerships team facilitated more than 20 micro-internships, reaching out to a variety of organisations in heritage, policy-making, higher education, and archaeology. 34% of all arts and heritage applications received by the Careers Service were for projects enabled by the Heritage Partnerships Team, contributing 3300 working hours to partner organisations.

Dr Oliver Cox was appointed to the Executive Committee of The Walpole Society and as an Advisory Group Member for 'The Devonshire Inheritance: Unlocking the Cavendish Family Papers'. He contributed three essays to the Paul Mellon Centre's Art and the Country House digital project and two articles for Apollo: The International Art Magazine. Alice Purkiss was featured in UKRI's '101 Jobs that Change the World'. Dr Hanna Smyth has joined the Ashmolean Museum as a Public Engagement with Research (PER) Associate as part of the museum's Talking Memory programme. Katerina Vavaliou has masterminded the team's use of a new CRM system to effectively manage our wide-ranging partnerships.

**Dr Oliver Cox, Heritage Engagement Fellow**

## National Trust Partnership

Launched in 2018, the National Trust Partnership facilitates interdisciplinary research, knowledge exchange, public engagement and training across a range of disciplines and career levels between the University of Oxford and the National Trust. The partnership is founded upon mutual benefit and knowledge exchange, with activities including research placements and consultancy, conferences, workshops, staff training and student internships, in addition to PhDs in partnership with the Oxford-Open-Cambridge AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership.

Adapting quickly to new ways of working and significant challenges posed to the heritage sector by the pandemic, the Partnership has continued to deliver a successful programme and has recently secured funding until 2023. Development work with senior academics has continued to grow collaborative teams around key curatorial themes; a Research Training Programme delivered by Oxford academics, GLAM staff, Humanities ECRs and graduate students offered over 250 National Trust staff professional development opportunities; 62 student 'micro-interns' worked remotely with Trust curators on week-long research projects, contributing over 2000 hours of new research into the charity's holdings when many properties, libraries and archives were closed. The Partnership was recently designated 'Gold Standard Internship Host' by Oxford's Careers Service in recognition of this work.

The cultural change driven by the partnership continues to open-up opportunities for impactful collaboration across a range of subjects and provides new ways of exploring the commercial value of research to the UK economy. The Partnership was selected as a sector case study by Heritage2020, a major collaborative initiative aiming to 'demonstrate how partnership working can add value and lead to the delivery of outcomes which will enhance the understanding, protection, and engagement of the historic environment in England.'

**Alice Purkiss, National Trust Partnership Lead**



# Knowledge Exchange Projects

## Andromeda Project

My research explores the relationship between form and politics in contemporary theatre, which I examine both through traditional critical research methods and through playwriting. Since 2017, I have been developing a queer adaptation of Euripides' fragmentary tragedy, *Andromeda*, in collaboration with director Charlotte Vickers. Our play constellates fragments from the Ancient Greek (in a new translation by Dr Martina Astrid Rodda) with scenes from a contemporary love story between two young women. In centring the experiences of its LGBTQ+ female characters, the play explores how the stories we tell each other impact our sense of identity.

Funding from the Theatres Seed Fund and Humanities Cultural Programme, together with grants from Arts Council England and in-kind support from theatre partners, allowed us to stage a 5-night run of *Andromeda* at Camden People's Theatre in July 2021. In particular, the HCP award enabled us to commission a professional recording of the production, which was livestreamed to audience members around the world and will be archived for future researchers. With support from TORCH, we organised a 'pre-show' online panel, which put theatre-makers in conversation with academics Professor Wes Williams and Marcus Bell. The lively discussion covered the reception of the *Andromeda* myth, the latest research into queering the Classics, and the creative process behind the play. The opportunity to bring my theatre practice into dialogue with cutting-edge research, which TORCH has facilitated, has been a highlight of my career so far.

**Dr Hannah Greenstreet (English)**



Rosie Gray and Nina Singh in *Andromeda*. Copyright Alex Powell



## Still Breathing

*Still Breathing* fuses music, dance, performance poetry and rituals to create a dance-theatre show that explores community grieving as yet another Black person's life has been taken by the hands of those tasked to protect us. How does one manage the anger, rage, frustration and fatigue with the need to celebrate and remember those lives?

It is the first part of a longer project, *Sign of the Times*, an interactive/immersive exhibition that explores how the African-Heritage Diaspora have used art and culture as a form of protest, resistance and resilience in our continual struggles for freedom, equality and justice.

As a theatre maker devising and creating new work, I'm well versed in desk research but this venture with TORCH and researchers is a completely new departure for me. Whilst still in its infancy, it has already provided wider context to the project as well as opened new possibilities for exploration. The suggestion of using the iconic Sheldonian Theatre being a prime example. From the moment it was suggested, I knew it was the ideal venue. *Still Breathing* is set within a church context and its sense of reverence and history was perfect for the context and backdrop to the unfolding story. Whilst only having a day in the space, it was sufficient for an R&D exploration and its potential is immense. It was a great example of how a space can influence the unfolding of a story in perhaps ways that a conventional theatre space don't quite give you.

Unlock the Chains Collective make and produce theatre that explores the Black experience. The project is currently supported by TORCH, Arts Council England, *Dancin'* Oxford, The North Wall Arts Centre and Oxford Playhouse.

**Euton Daley**

## Language Education Research and the Department for Education

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/language-education-research-and-the-department-for-education](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/language-education-research-and-the-department-for-education)

My Knowledge Exchange Fellowship allowed me to share research evidence on the benefits of teaching ancient languages with the humanities and languages curriculum policy team at the Department for Education in England. Since 2014, I have led the award-winning *Classics in Communities* project which investigates the impact that learning ancient languages (Latin and Greek) has on children's cognitive development. As a Knowledge Exchange Fellow, I was able to use this research evidence to provide advice on 1) effective teaching of the primary languages curriculum in schools; 2) improved transition in languages between primary and secondary schools; and, ultimately, 3) fulfilling the ambition for students to complete the language element of the English Baccalaureate. On 31st July 2021, the Department for Education announced a £4 million investment in the Latin Excellence Programme, to widen access to the study of Latin and Classics in state schools.

The feedback, insight and questions from policy colleagues directly contributed to my own evolving research agenda, for example by making it more responsive to gaps in policy delivery. In February 2020, I became the Oxford Policy Engagement Network's Policy Leader for the Humanities Division and in 2021 was appointed to the British Academy's National Languages Advisory Group and became expert advisor to two all-party parliamentary groups. During my Fellowship, I was invited to speak about my experience of policy engagement as a Humanities researcher at the Institute for Government, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the British Academy, the Universities Policy Engagement Network and at TORCH.

**Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson (Classics)**



## Keeping Well with Dance during the Pandemic

Every individual is unique, and centuries of research has clearly shown the big diversity in how people do things differently in different cultures. Yet, something that has been consistently found in all known human cultures is dance. Young or old, as trained professionals or complete novices, alone or in a group – one way or another – we all dance.

In this project, we wanted to understand what dance can do for promoting young people's mental wellbeing and connections with their peers. Previous research studies show that dancing with others can strengthen social bonds between people and activate neuro-hormonal systems that make us feel more elated. Building upon this, we set out to examine how a 5-week hip-hop dance programme could make positive changes on young people.

Sixty 11-16 year-olds from all over the UK participated in this project. Originally planned to be delivered in-person, the emerging Covid-19 lockdown rules meant that the dance classes had to be delivered online. Meanwhile, the Covid-19 pandemic made the focus on young people's mental wellbeing and social connections all the more pertinent a topic. At a time when many young people had to cut down on social contact that is critical for their development during these formative years, this programme provided a way of connecting with peers, staying physically active, and, consequently, mentally healthier.

One participant commented that the programme felt "like a family", while others said it "was a good stress reliever" and allowed them to "have a sneak hideaway from current life". Through the surveys the young people filled out before and after taking part in the programme, we have been able to demonstrate the positive changes in their mental wellbeing, more optimistic outlook about their future, and social connections with peers. "I learnt that life is like dance", said one participant, "I can learn the moves if I keep trying".

The TORCH Theatres Seed Fund enabled a collaboration between the Body Politic Dance company and Dr Bahar Tunçgenç and Dr Emma Cohen of Oxford's Social Body Lab. The team have shared their experiences in a public seminar entitled "It'll never work on Zoom: Learnings in online participation", which can be accessed [online](#).

More information about the project can be found [here](#). A scientific journal publication detailing the study findings will follow in due course.

**Dr Bahar Tunçgenç (Anthropology)**



[Image: Stefano Evangelista]

## Berlin through the Eyes of English Writers

In the early twentieth century Berlin became a magnet for foreign writers and artists who wanted to experience the city's vibrant cultural life and its famously liberal attitude to sexual diversity.

My KE project enabled me to work with the Literaturhaus-Berlin and the Bodleian Library to explore how English writers discovered and wrote about Berlin in this period. Our collaboration resulted in three linked exhibitions that took place in summer 2021 in Oxford and Berlin. The main exhibit in the Literaturhaus charted the presence of English writers in various key locations around the city, such as cafés, cabarets and the Institute for Sexual Science; it also featured a specially designed sound installation that recreated the soundscape of Christopher Isherwood's Berlin. In Oxford, a display in Blackwell Hall focused on interwar Berlin as experienced by the writer Stephen Spender, whose extensive and fascinating archive is housed in the Bodleian Library. A third exhibit in the Humboldt University, curated by my colleague Gesa Stedman of the Centre for British Studies, explored the intersection of 'Politics, Psychoanalysis and Pleasure'. To accompany the exhibition, the Literaturhaus hosted a series of live and online events featuring academic experts and writers, while the Bodleian put on two workshops for A-level students.

Building on my successful KEF application, I secured AHRC funding that enabled me to finance the most costly elements of the exhibitions, such as the sound installation, the production of a bilingual illustrated catalogue and the live events. The project also led to further collaborations with new partners, including Oxford in Berlin, the Oxford Lieder Festival and Berlin's Universität der Künste.

**Dr Stefano Evangelista (English)**



## Marie-Antoinette: A Life in Objects

Started before the pandemic, Professor Catriona Seth KE fellowship aimed to look at Marie-Antoinette's life through objects present in public collections. With Catriona Oliphant of Chrome Radio she had made three visits to Waddesdon Manor, the Wallace Collection and the Conciergerie in Paris before travel became impossible. They reshaped their original plans and prepared three long podcasts (two in English and one in French) rather than five short ones which were launched in January 2021 (<https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/footsteps-marie-antoinette>). In these podcasts, Catriona Seth engages with the curators of the institutions and together they evoke the life and times of the most famous Frenchwoman in history, but also the way in which objects were made and handed down to us for posterity. The result makes fascinating listening as it is a real dialogue between experts – who are learning from each other all the while – and is addressed to interested but non-specialist audiences.

Other media activity followed on from the KE fellowship with Catriona Seth being invited to take part in an American podcast called The Alarmist (The Alarmist Podcast: The Aftermath: Beheading of Marie-Antoinette | Luminary ([luminarypodcasts.com](http://luminarypodcasts.com))) and, as a direct result of the conversations at the Wallace Collection, she gave a joint presentation with curator Dr Helen Jacobsen as part of the Museum's series for Women's History Month on Revealing Marie-Antoinette (YouTube).

**Professor Catriona Seth (Medieval and Modern Languages), FBA**

## New Liberia and other Projects

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/new-liberia-and-other-projects](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/new-liberia-and-other-projects)

In 2020, my planned exhibitions included *New Liberia*, a solo show with Modern Art Oxford, supported by my KE Fellowship. This would be anticipated by other projects, including a solo exhibition at Culturgest Lisbon, where I planned to explore aspects of the trade union activities of the Malawian Clements Kadalie, the first Black trade unionist in South Africa.

In March 2020, the coronavirus halted these plans, and this meant that both my timelines and my planned Fellowship proposals were changed; venues were closed, planned travel was not possible, and the success of my Fourth Plinth proposal also had an impact.

*New Liberia* eventually became Modern Art Oxford's reopening show in May 2021. It secured funding from the John Fell Fund, TORCH and Magdalen College, with new work commissioned by Modern Art Oxford, including *Drawing Elephants*, two Nyau elephant structures covered

in cloth repurposed from Oxford MA gowns. I anticipated this solo show with open seminars on John Ruskin, and how his ideas of drawing and socialised art practice relate to my work as an artist of African origin. These were hosted by TORCH as part of my Knowledge Exchange Fellowship. The seminars were in collaboration with curator Emma Ridgway, and they attracted many students, staff and invited members of the public. Other events involved the writer McKenzie Wark and a seminar on dress, politics and power by fashion researchers.

The exhibition also featured aspects of the life of the little known but critical Malawian pan-Africanist John Chilembwe (1871-1915), in the form of a "ghost maquette" of my Fourth Plinth proposal, *Antelope*. Chilembwe's performative strategies for resistance against colonial rule were re-purposed in my work as a means of escaping reification and the constraints of everyday life as an immigrant African British citizen. The exhibition was in diverse media from video and painting to installation and sculpture.

**Professor Samson Kambalu (Ruskin)**



Still from *Walk don't Walk* by Samson Kambalu, 2016



St *New Liberia* and other projects, still of digital video *Moses burning bush* by and with Samson Kambalu and Kate Macgarry

## Heritage Seed Fund

I am a DPhil student at The Ruskin School of Art. Between 2020-21, I learnt traditional indigenous Ainu cooking from Ms Kane Kumagai throughout different seasons in Hokkaido in Japan as part of my ethnography-led art practice. The Ainu are an indigenous people in the northern part of Japan and Sakhalin Island off Russia. Ainu cooking practices are considered to be ecological and community-oriented. However, Ms Kumagai became the last person to hold what people call 'genuine' knowledge of Samani Ainu because Japan had colonized Hokkaido at the end of 19th century. I explored how our sensory knowledge-based engagement with both people and nature contributes to a

diverse ecosystem and move away from norms that have been shaped by patriarchy, capitalism, and imperialism. The Heritage Seed Fund helped me to develop a stronger relationship with the Foundation for Ainu Culture in Samani.

Since I returned to the UK, I shared my research process and findings through exhibitions and online events such as 'Tonkori: Musical Conversations with Oki', 'Marewrew's Voice', 'My Neighbour's Meal' at 95 Gloucester Green, and 'Autumn Salmon' at the Pitt Rivers Museum. Through public facing platforms, I initiated conversations about decolonising actions, equality, and environmentalism in an interdisciplinary environment.

**Eiko Soga (DPhil in Fine Art)**



# Humanities Cultural Programme

## Humanities Cultural Programme

**Head of Cultural Programming and Partnerships,  
Dr Victoria McGuinness**

A major part of future Humanities Cultural Programme activity will be the Seasons – themed festivals bringing together academics and cultural partners to engage the wider public through innovative events, grounded in collaboration. In 2021, our Japan and Dante Seasons will engage audiences online and in person, with Egypt and AI on the horizon in 2022.

The Seasons provide an opportunity to expand the public engagement work that has always been a key element of TORCH's activity. Building on the success of our Big Tent! Live Event series in the last year, which has reached thousands of people worldwide, we will create content that is both thought-provoking and enjoyable, featuring outstanding artists, writers, and thinkers, all powered by University of Oxford's world-leading research and unique collections.

## Projects

We've been proud to support projects through the Humanities Cultural Programme: cultural collaborations with academic leads. These projects have explored everything from dyslexia to queer rural connections, taking place in theatres, allotments, and much more.

Over the course of several months, the Queer Rural Connections project gathered oral testimony from LGBTQIA+ people living in rural areas, and used this to create *The Stars are Brighter Here*, a site-specific play staged at the Museum of East Anglian Life and the Museum of English Rural Life, with audiences meeting modern and historical characters as they moved around the museums.

The project culminated with a documentary, where project lead Timothy Allsop interviewed LGBTQIA+ people living in Suffolk, discovering how their environment shaped their experiences and the possibilities for creating new queer spaces.



WITH JC NIALA AND  
DR. ELIZABETH EWART

THURSDAY 9 APRIL | 5PM



Meanwhile, *TIDE Salon: An interactive multimedia exchange of music and spoken word poetry by South Asian British Artists* developed immersive creative responses to research by Professor Nandini Das. Alien, stranger, foreigner, exile, citizen – these are among the many words and concepts that were shaped in crucial and lasting ways by travel, trade, and colonialism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, informing ongoing debates about belonging and identity.



The Salon, nominated for a Digital Humanities Public Engagement Award, brought together these audio-visual responses by writers and musicians and allowed users to navigate them freely, digging into research if they chose, or simply listening to the music. This project is a perfect example of the innovative public engagement we hope to generate through the Humanities Cultural Programme.

### Creative Learning

As part of our commitment to engaging a wide spectrum of local communities, we were delighted to welcome four interns in a partnership with Activate Colleges. These sixth form students joined the team for a month, informing our plans for the upcoming Seasons by approaching the themes of Japan, Dante, and AI with their personal creative talents.

This yielded four pieces of new creative work that we look forward to sharing as part of the Seasons. Focusing on the Japan theme, one of our interns took a series of photographs featuring Japanese dress, whilst a second took inspiration from Dante to craft a piece of creative writing. The two interns working on the AI theme created a complex piece of VFX work to introduce the season, and a short film featuring a cyborg respectively.

For TORCH, this was a mutually beneficial sharing of insights into the richness of the humanities and how we might engage new audiences in ways that were meaningful to them. We are excited to continue this partnership and develop new methods of creative learning.

### Visiting Fellowships

Our Visiting Fellows this year were theatre director Katie Mitchell, actor and playwright Lolita Chakrabarti, and artists Tom Hammick and Khaled Kaddal.

We started the academic year with one of our most watched conversations, between Katie Mitchell and actor

Ben Whishaw. This wide-ranging conversation reflected on the pandemic's creative effects, its limitations and surprises, with a particular focus on the element of liveness and theatre's relationship with the climate crisis. Mitchell carried these themes through many of her conversations over the course of the year, as she collaborated with academics and artists alike.

Exploring the theatre from a different angle, Lolita Chakrabarti discussed the craft of acting in a public conversation, and worked closely with students through a pair of workshops, the first a masterclass taking a close look at Chakrabarti's play *Red Velvet*, and the second, a Q&A offering insight into how to navigate a career as an actor and playwright.

In the visual arts, Tom Hammick deepened his collaborative relationship with academic Professor Kate McLoughlin over the course of his Fellowship. Together, they explored silence – specifically the creation, significance and history of silence in painting and poetry, juxtaposing pictures and texts in a mutually illuminating way.

Interdisciplinary artist Khaled Kaddal collaborated with Dr Darci Sprengel as he worked on *The Formula of Giving a Heart*, a cybernetic conversation between computational technology and the body. We were able to premiere the piece on our YouTube channel, following the launch with a panel discussion which used the piece to probe the socio-political environment.

# BOOK AT LUNCHTIME

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/book-at-lunchtime](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/book-at-lunchtime)

Book at Lunchtime is a series of bite-sized book discussions held fortnightly during term-time, with commentators from a range of disciplines. The events are free to attend and open to members of the University and the public alike, featuring books from a wide range of subjects.

Michaelmas term 2020 began with *Iconoclasm as Child's Play* by Dr Joseph Moshenska, before moving on to *Commemorative Modernisms: Women Writers, Death and the First World War* by Dr Alice Kelly; *Shipwreck in French Renaissance Writing: The Direful Spectacle* by Dr Jennifer Oliver;

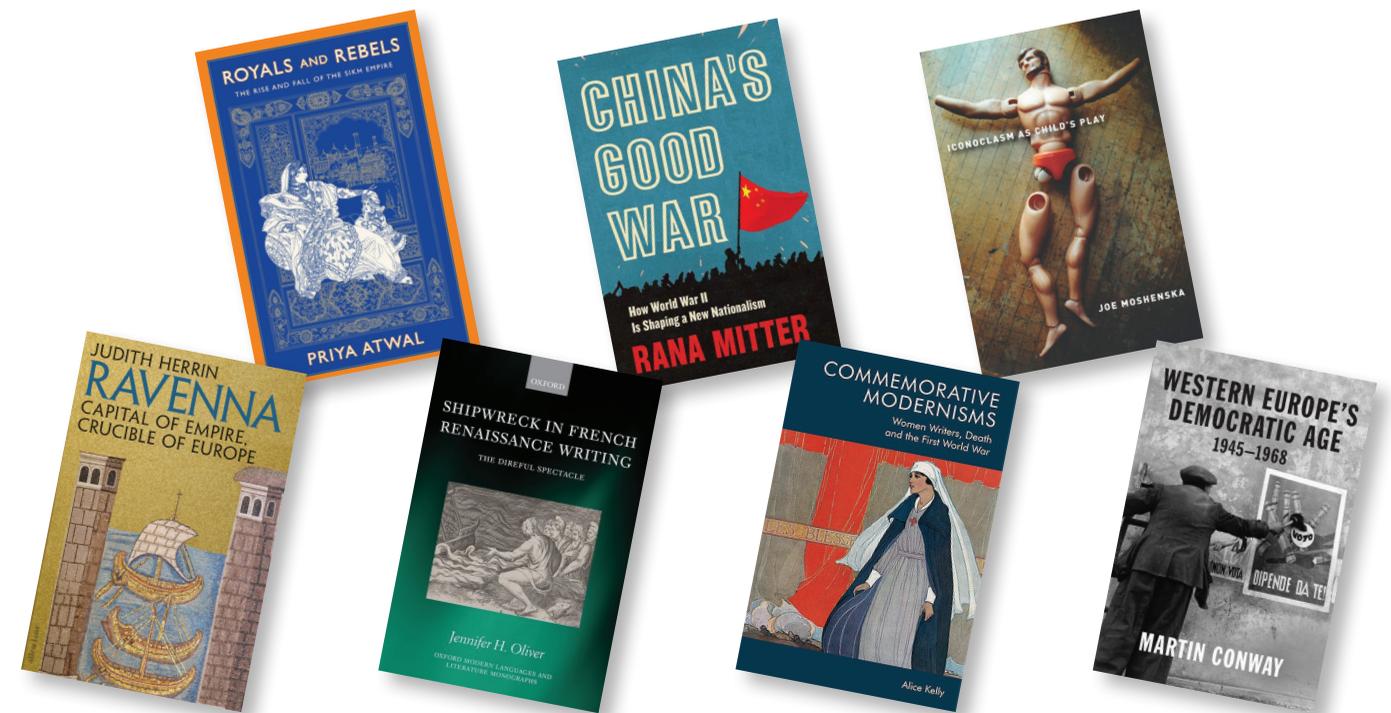
*Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe* by Professor Judith Herrin; *Western Europe's Democratic Age: 1945–1968* by Professor Martin Conway and *Tenter* by Susie Campbell.

In Hilary term 2021, we held discussions on *Royals and Rebels: The Rise and Fall of the Sikh Empire* by Dr Priya Atwal; *The Political Life of an Epidemic - Cholera, Crisis and Citizenship in*

*Zimbabwe* by Professor Simukai Chigudu; *Sophocles: Antigone and Other Tragedies* by Professor Oliver Taplin, and *Charles Dickens and the Properties of Fiction: The Lodger World* by Dr Ushashi Dasgupta.

Finally, Trinity term 2021 saw panels on *China's Good War: How World War II is Shaping a New Nationalism* by Professor Rana Mitter, *Porcelain: Poem on the Downfall of my City* by Durs Grünbein, translated by Professor Karen Leeder; *Born to Write: Literary Families and Social Hierarchy in Early Modern France* by Professor Neil Kenny; *Jews, Liberalism, Antisemitism: A Global History*, edited by Professor Abigail Green and Professor Simon Levis Sullam and finishing with *Real Oxford* by Professor Patrick McGuinness.

As we move into the next academic year, we look forward to showcasing even more outstanding works by a diverse range of authors, and making these available to all via the TORCH YouTube channel.



# DISAPPOINTED GUESTS:

## Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Supported Project

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk)

This project builds on a 1965 edited volume published by Oxford University Press, *Disappointed Guests*, which contained chapters written by ethnic minority foreign students who studied in the UK. We will produce a multi-authored book that explores a wide range of issues about race and the University of Oxford, alongside public events and online material to coincide with its publication.

We envisage that this book will engage with current debates on the experiences of people racialised as non-white within the space of the University past and present, including students, academic and non-academic staff. It will also ask how the University is addressing the legacies of slavery and colonialism.

Whilst focusing on the University of Oxford, the contributions will speak to critical research trends on the intellectual history of the racial liberal subject, challenges, and particular moments, such that the text can appeal to a wide audience. Our aim is to make this volume an indispensable account of research in our dynamic field.

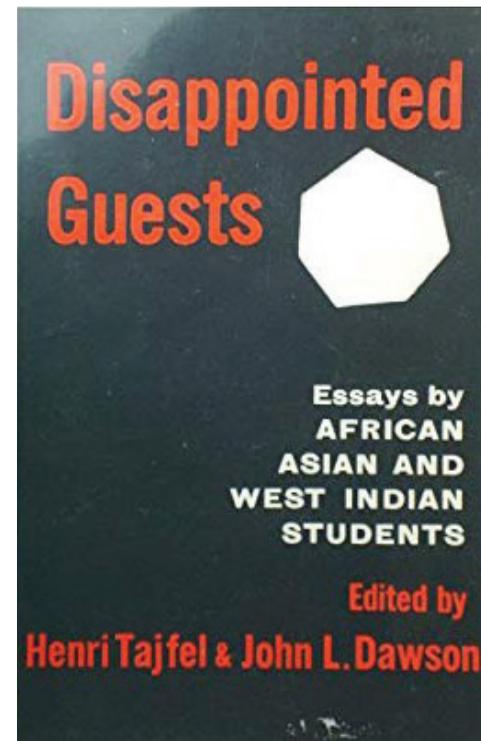
We will interrogate the use and meanings of the key terms: 'guests' and 'disappointed', which suggest assumptions of inclusion, exclusion, and belonging. The book explores the meaning of 'guests' from the perspective of the University and 'disappointed' as one of the reactions of students racialised as black, whether in the past or present.

While 'disappointed' is a key overarching theme, we see 'disappointed guests' not as a singular category because we understand that the student experience in Oxford has been shaped by differences of gender, social status, different continental origins, and so on. The book will explore a variety

of themes including anti-racist activism and the production of ideas of race, and across a range of contexts, from the city to the wider British Empire.

Situated within changing global and research landscapes, the project is a form of active reflection on race in the university environment.

**Professor Stephen Tuck (History)**



# SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCHERS

**Dr Ruth Ramsden-Karelse**  
Faculty of English

In September 2021, I completed my DPhil in English. My thesis argues that the Kewpie Collection represents a politically and culturally important theory-practice of worldmaking. This collection of photographs and testimony, held at South Africa's GALA Queer Archive, depicts a group of self-described gays and girls living in apartheid Cape Town's multicultural District Six, before they were forcibly removed because the area was declared "Whites Only" in 1966. Contra its common reception as documentary evidence, indicative of past social integration, I contend that the Kewpie Collection represents the girls' labour to imagine otherwise and, ultimately, transform their sociopolitical terrain. Inadvertently, this labour was obscured by the urgent 1990s gay rights agenda that informed the photographs' archivalisation. Ultimately, however, I argue that the girls' efforts to make new worlds hold vital and as-yet unexplored possibilities for making liveable lives that exceed the logics of hegemonic discourses on gender, sexuality, and race.

My doctoral work has been made possible by the inaugural Stuart Hall Doctoral Scholarship, in collaboration with TORCH, Merton College, and the Stuart Hall Foundation and, thanks to additional financial support from TORCH, I have been able to travel to South Africa to conduct crucial research. Moreover, the funding for networks and programmes that TORCH makes available has allowed me to found and co-convene Oxford's first interdisciplinary Queer Studies Network, which established valuable academic community through a rich and popular programme of regular events running from 2017-2021. Beyond my DPhil, I look forward to continuing my work with TORCH as a member of the Intersectional Humanities Steering Group.



# SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCHERS

## Dr Gascia Ouzounian

Faculty of Music

I'm a sound theorist and practitioner who directs the project Sonorous Cities: Towards a Sonic Urbanism (SONCITIES). This is a 5-year project supported by a €2 million Consolidator Grant from the European Research Council (ERC). It asks: how can we engage with the urban sonic sphere with architects, planners, and other spatial practitioners in ways that extend beyond noise control? We are exploring this question through ethnographic research with urban sonic communities, workshops and design weeks with architects, and public events that are listed at [soncities.org](http://soncities.org).

A TORCH KE Fellowship, 'Scoring the City', was the seed grant for this project ([www.scoring.city](http://www.scoring.city)). I held the fellowship in partnership with John Bingham-Hall and Theatrum Mundi, an organisation devoted to the crafts of city-making. Together we invited 80 architects, artists, and urban designers in four cities to create 'urban scores' inspired by graphic scores, text-based scores, and other experimental notations in music. Their scores challenged the idea of the static urban plan or fixed architectural blueprint. How can architects 'score' for improvised, informal, and flexible modes of urban living?

The project sparked many collaborations; and one architect told me that he now thinks about scoring whenever he creates new architectural designs.

The TORCH fellowship was key to securing the ERC grant and to demonstrating that we can generate new methods at the intersection of sound, architecture, and urbanism. It also set into motion many relationships that are deepening through the SONCITIES project. I'm grateful for the opportunity and the generous support of the TORCH community.



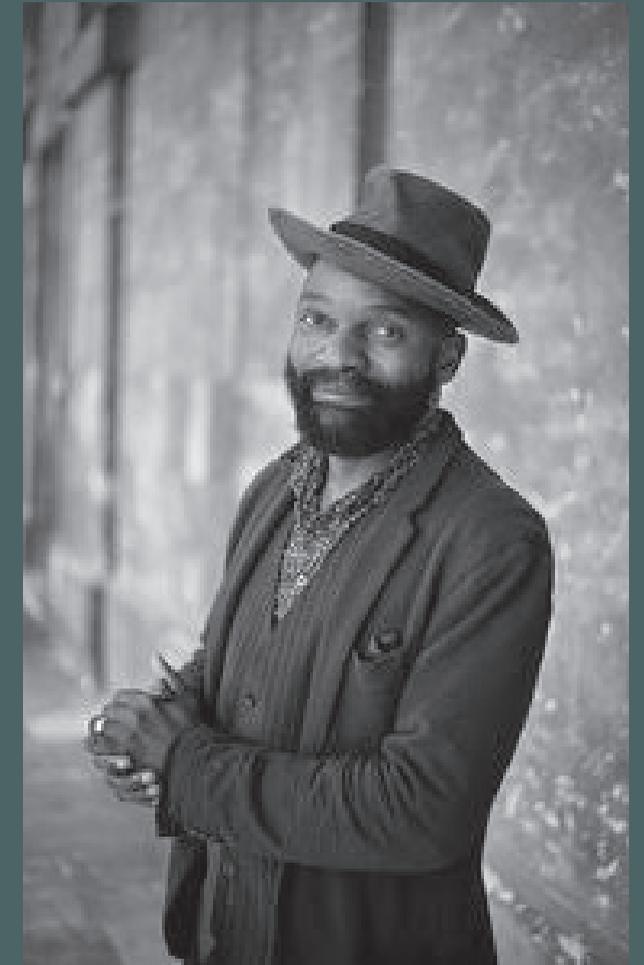
## Professor Samson Kambalu

Ruskin School of Art

I work in a variety of media, including site-specific installation, video, performance and literature. My work is autobiographical and approaches art as an arena for critical thought and sovereign activities. My basic influences are Situationism, the Nyau pre-station cultures of Malawi, and the Protestant tradition of inquiry, criticism and dissent.

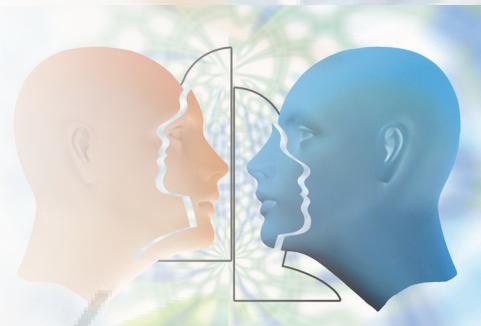
My current research is grounded in art, film and praxis and how they relate to the problematic of the gift. My "Nyau Cinema" is a spontaneous and socialised way of filmmaking inspired by Situationist ideas of psychogeography – I walk and make short 'animated' films to found film sets during my international travels. The abstract films in which I feature are filmed by strangers whom I often go on to forge friendships with. The aesthetic of Nyau cinema is inspired by the non-linear film dispositifs of the travelling projectionists of my childhood, the Nyau pre-station culture of the Chewa of Malawi, aspects of Dada and Surrealism, and early film – the so-called "cinema of attractions" (Tom Gunning). The psychogeography in my films is inspired by the histories of the found film sets. My Nyau cinema films often debut on social media before they are shown in galleries and employ aspects of the whole film dispositif – posters, projectors, archiving and so on, as part of their formal and ubiquitous manifestation.

My recent show at Modern Art Oxford, New Liberia, was conceived as a cinema palace which included TORCH-funded seminars on how some ideas of John Ruskin relate to my work. My current project Antelope, a bronze sculpture commissioned for the Fourth Plinth on Trafalgar Square, employs the logic of film to position the pan-African John Chilembwe with current debates regarding public sculpture.



# EARLY CAREERS

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/earlycareer](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/earlycareer)



The Humanities Division's researcher development and training programme continued to thrive throughout the pandemic, adapting successfully to online delivery and taking advantage of new modes of engagement. Nearly 50 unique events and courses were delivered in over 100 iterations to nearly 3,000 attendees. We were pleased to be able to support and connect early career researchers across disciplines during an extremely challenging year.

This year, in collaboration with Professor María del Pilar Blanco (TORCH Academic Champion for Networks and Partnerships) and Professor Wes Williams (TORCH Director), we launched a pilot of Interdisciplinary Connections, a series of informal networking events that provide an opportunity for researchers at any stage of their career to connect across faculties with others working on similar, cognate or connected topics. The themes of 'Women', 'Conflict and Resistance' and 'The Natural World' were chosen in consultation with researchers and with reference to TORCH's current focus areas. 75 bookings were made in total during the pilot and feedback was positive. We hope to develop this initiative further in 2021-22, thereby enabling new connections and collaborations that may lead to, amongst other outcomes, new research networks and projects.

## Public Engagement with Research Online Course

This course builds on the legacy of the face-to-face Public Engagement with Research Summer School, which took place with the support of TORCH on an annual basis from 2015 to 2019. The online course provides doctoral and early career researchers with the skills and resources to integrate public engagement into their research and to broaden their understanding of the wealth of opportunities available for bringing research to diverse audiences.

The course includes input from experts from a range of institutions and humanities disciplines, who share their experience and advice on integrating public engagement into academic research. Over the course of nine weekly modules, TORCH Knowledge Exchange Fellows, Public Engagement Executives from Academic and Cultural

Heritage Institutions, Access and Outreach Officers, artists, journalists and podcasters lead workshops that give participants focused training on how to develop public engagement with research projects across a wide variety of mediums. The course consists of live panel discussions and pre-recorded video sessions which can be completed flexibly and asynchronously.

The pilot iteration of the course ran in early 2021 with a cohort of 40, selected from 133 applicants. The course is now in a phase of evaluation and further development, and we hope to roll it out more widely in 2022. Both the original Public Engagement with Research Summer School and the online course have been designed, delivered and evaluated by a succession of teams of DPhil students and early career researchers employed on a part-time basis as Graduate Project Coordinators, whose roles also included delivery of the Student Peer Review College (providing peer review training and researcher-led evaluation of applications to the Graduate Fund) and Graduate Fund (funding for researcher-led interdisciplinary conferences, podcasts and public engagement projects). These initiatives have now come to an end due to time-limited funding, but their success has been driven entirely by the enthusiasm and hard work of the Graduate Project Coordinators over the course of six years. We thank them for their dedication, their vision, and the legacy they have left to the next generation of humanities researchers.

### Graduate Project Coordinators over the years:

- 2014-15: Adele Bardazzi and Alexis Brown
- 2015-16 and 2016-17: Emily Knight and Rhea Sookdeosingh
- 2017-18: Hanna Smyth and Lidia Zanetti-Domingues
- 2018-19: Sumner Braund and Glenn Cahilly-Bretzin
- 2019-20: Francesca Kaes and Stefanie Arend
- 2020-21: Francesca Kaes, Damian Maher, and Glenn Cahilly-Bretzin

**Dr Caroline Thurston Humanities Resource Development and Training Manager**

# DONATING TO TORCH

TORCH is funded by various sources, including the University's John Fell Fund, with additional support from Trusts and Foundations, as well as private donors. TORCH is grateful to have also received funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, as well as other donations, totalling over £3 million for the years 2013–2021.

TORCH has now completed its sixth full year in operation (2020–21) and continues to support, facilitate and encourage interdisciplinary research. As part of the University of Oxford's Humanities Division, TORCH is based in the Radcliffe Humanities building in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter.

By providing small amounts of seed-funding to new research networks, TORCH has become an invaluable testing ground for innovative research projects. These projects are supported by TORCH's infrastructure, which offers free rooms for events, website hosting and advice, and investment from the TORCH team. Selected on a highly competitive basis, funding for networks lasts for up to two years, after which many networks apply for further external funding, bringing in valuable research grants to the University. Many networks go on to be more established research programmes at TORCH, using new approaches to tackle some of the challenging questions of our time.

TORCH is a very young institution in the University of Oxford's 900-year history, but it has already made a great impact in the University, in the UK, and internationally and, with support, its impact will continue to grow.

We are extremely grateful to all our supporters. If you would like to give a gift to TORCH, please contact Dr Victoria McGuinness (Head of Cultural Programming Partnerships): [victoria.mcguinness@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:victoria.mcguinness@humanities.ox.ac.uk) or online via the University campaign:

[www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/torch](http://www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/torch)

The TORCH vision immediately inspired me and I felt compelled to contribute from the beginning. At a time when so much research is becoming so highly specialised and inaccessible to the layman, it is critical that we support initiatives that will break down the barriers and refashion the way in which the humanities are presented, taught, thought about and communicated to future generations.

*Julian Schild, alumnus,  
Pembroke College, Modern History*

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Pembroke College, Modern History*



# TORCH | THE OXFORD RESEARCH CENTRE IN THE HUMANITIES

## TORCH TEAM

Professor Wes Williams, TORCH Director

Professor Maria del Pilar Blanco

Dr Victoria McGuinness, Head of Cultural Programming and Partnerships

Dr Justine Shaw, Operations Manager and Humanities Cultural Programme Senior Coordinator (from January 2021)

Sarah Clay, Operations Manager

## NETWORKS AND PROGRAMMES

Sarah Bebb, Networks and Programmes Officer (until September 2021)

## HUMANITIES CULTURAL PROGRAMME:

Hayley Merchant, Humanities Cultural Programme Senior Coordinator (until January 2022)

Liz Green, Humanities Cultural Programme Events Manager

Holly Knights, Humanities Cultural Programme Events Manager

Krisztina Lugosi, Humanities Cultural Programme Events Officer

Nikki Carter, Networks and Humanities Cultural Programme Officer

## KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Professor Abigail Williams, Knowledge Exchange, Impact and Innovation

Barbara Zweifel, Knowledge Exchange Support Officer

Ruth Moore, Theatres Officer

Tasha Patel, Creative Industries Officer

## INTERNATIONAL

Dr Anbara Khalidi, International Officer

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